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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 A-01 AID-05 CCO-00 HA-05 OC-06
OMB-01 OPR-02 CA-01 MCT-01 SCS-06 SY-05 USSS-00
PC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13
/111 W
----------055822 100258Z /65/46
P R 011450Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8223
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMCONSUL KADUNA

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 3)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, NI
SUBJECT: QUIET WEEKEND IN LAGOS

REF: LAGOS 5400

1. SUMMARY: AFTER THE RIOTS OF FRIDAY NIGHT THE SITUATION IN LAGOS REMAINED CALM OVER THE WEEKEND. THE POLICE ISSUED A REPORT SATURDAY ON THE SITUATION STATING THAT 52HHAD BEEN ARRESTED, REPORTING ON DAMAGE, AND WARNING THAT THEY HAD MOUNTED FOUR HOUR PATROLS THROUGHOUT LAGOS. THE PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIAN UNION OF STUDENTS HAS REAPPEARED AFTER SEVERAL DAYS ABSENCE AND PRESENTED DAMANDS FOR ENDING THE CRISIS. WE BELIEVE THE GOVERNEMNT CAN CONTROL THE SITUATION IF POLICE RESPOND QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY IN THE EVENT OF FURHTER OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE. THE GREATEST DANGER LIES
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IN SOMEONE ATTTEMPTING TO CAPITALIZE ON THE SITUATIION FOR HIS HOWN POLITICAL REASONS. EMBASSY IS CONTINUING TO EXERCISE CAUTION ON MOVEMENT OF ITS PERSONNEL TO AND FROM THE AIRPORT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE WEEKEND WAS FAIRLY QUIET IN LAGOS AFTER THE RIOTS OF FRIDAY NIGHT. THERE WERE RUMORS OF

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MORE PROBLEMS ON SATURDAY EVENING, BUT EXCEPT FOR ONE REPORTED CLASH BETWEEN POLICE AND CROWDS AFTER A SPORTS EVENT SATURDAY EVENING, THE SITUATUION REMAINS CALM. PUBLIC BUSES WHICH HAD CEASED OPERATION OVER THE WEEKEND WERE BACK IN SERVICE ON MONDAY. THE POLICE ACTED QUICLY ISSUING A STATEMENT ON DISTURBANCES SATURDAY REPORTING THAT 52 HAD BEEN ARRESTED, MORE THAN 30 VEHICLES DESTROYED, TWO KILLED (EMBOFFS SAW MORE THAN TWO BODIES), AND THE CUSTOMS HOUSE ON IKORODU ROAD, A LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICE AND A POST OFFICE IN SURELERE HAD BEEN BURNED. THE STATEMENT ALSO SAID, "IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED WITH CERTITUDE THAT THE STUDENTS SOLICITED AND EMPLOYED THE SERVICES OF UNDESIRABLES AND ROBBERS TO COMMIT THEIR LAWLESS ACTS AND THROUGH INTIMIDATION AND PHYSICAL ATTACK, FORCED SCHOOL CHILDREN...ON TO THE STREETS." AFTER ADVISING PARENTS AND TEACHERS TO ASSUME THEIR "OBLIGATIONS AND DUTIES" IT ANNOUNCED THAT POLICE HAD MOUNTED TWENTY-FOUR HOUR PATROLS AND "ALL LAW ABIDING CITIZENS SHOULD GO ABOUT THEIR NORMAL DUTIES."

3. SEGUN OKEOWO, PRESIDENT OF THE BANNED NATIONAL UNION OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS (NUNS) HAD NOT BEEN SEEN FOR SEVERAL DAYS AND RUMORS CIRCULATED THAT HE HAD BEEN ARRESTED. ON SUNDAY, HOWEVER, HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

SURFACED AT THE DAILY TIMES OFFICE ANNOUNCING THAT HE WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE NEWLY CREATED NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS (NONS) AND LEFT A STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF HIS NEW ORGANIZ-ATION. THE STATEMENT GAVE THREE CONDITIONS FOR PEACE:

--AN IMMEDIATE LIFTING OF THE BAN ON NUNS AND RECOGNITION OF THAT ORGANIZATION AS THE ONLY ACCREDITED BODY FOR MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATION;

--AN IMMEDIATE PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE KILLINGS DURING THE CRISIS;

--AN UNCONDITIONAL OPENING OF THE CLOSED UNIVERISTIES.

4. DEFENDING THE STUDENT ACTIONS, THE NONS STATE-MENT SAID, "NIGERIAN STUDENTS HAVE ALWAYS ASSERTED THAT THEY ARE NOT ONLY LEADERS OF TOMORROW, BUT PARTNERS IN THE PROGRESS OF TODAY....IT IS CALCULATED BLACKMAIL TO CONJECTURE THAT THE PROTEST IS EITHER PLANNED TO DISRUPT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY WITH A VIEW TO MAKING 1979 UNREALISTIC OR TO SATISFY CERTAIN OUTSIDE

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 A-01 AID-05 CCO-00 HA-05 OC-06
OMB-01 OPR-02 CA-01 MCT-01 SCS-06 SY-05 USSS-00
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/111 W
----------127734 020654Z /21
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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8224
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN
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COLLABORATORS. HOW COULD NIGERIAN STUDENTS (WANT TO DISRUPT)...THE POLITICAL PROGRAM...WHEN THEY WERE THE MOST VOCAL AND MOST IMPATIENT IN URGING THE ARMY BACK TO THE BARRACKS?"

5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM A DAILY TIMES REPORTER FRIDAY EVEING COL. AHMADU ALI, COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, SAID HE COULD NOT RESIGN BECAUSE HE WOULD BE "COURT MARTIALED" IF HE DID. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE DECISION TO BAN NUNS WAS NOT A PERSONAL ONE--PRESUMABLY IMPLYING THAT THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL HAD MADE IT.

6. THE STATE COMMISSIONERS OF EDUCATION AND COL. ALI MET IN ILORIN AND ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE THIS WEEKEND WHICH EMPHASIZED THAT TUITION WAS FREE TO ALL STUDENTS AND THAT BOARDING FEES DID NOT APPLY TO TECHNICAL STUDENTS. THEY ALSO NOTED THAT BOARDING AND LODGING FEES IN THE UNIVERSITIES WERE ONLY A SMALL COST OF THE TRAINING (9 PERCENT) FOR
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UNDERGRADUATES. ALTHOUGH NOT REPORTED IN THE PRESS, IN HIS REVIEW OF THE MEETING ON NIGERIAN TELEVISION COLONEL ALI ALSO SAID THAT STUDENTS WOULD NOT BE DENIED THWE RIGHT TO ATTEND UNIVERSITIES BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF FUNDS AND INSISTED THAT STATE PROGRAMS WOULD TAKE CARE OF THEM.

7. MEDIA COMMENTARY EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR THE VIOLENCE, CALLED FOR A HALT AND IN SOME CASES REITERATED EARLIER CALLS FOR ALI'S REMOVAL. INTERESTINGLY, BRIGADIER DAVID M. JEMIBEWON, GOVERNOR OF OYO STATE, HAS BECOME SOMETHING OF A MEDIA HERO THROUGH HIS ACTIONS LAST WEEK. HE WAS REPORTEDLY IN HIS CAR AT THE STATE SECRETARIAT LAST WEEK WHEN THE STUDENTS ATTACKED THE CAR. ALTHOUG UNABLE TO CALM STUDENTS HE DID APPARENTLY ACT TO PREVENT BLOODSHED BY HIS ORDERS TO POLICE QUARDS. HE HAS RECEIVED COMPLIMENTARY EDITORIAL COMMENTS IN THE PRESS AND WAS INTERVIEWED AT LENGTH ON THE TELEVISION NEWS SUNDAY EVENING.

8. AS REPORTED EARLIER THER IS POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE ON THE LABOR FRONT. THE NIGERIAN UNION OF TEACHERS (NUTS) HAS CONTINUED TO RESTRAIN ITSELF. THE NIGERIA LABOR CONGRESS (NLC) IN ITS MAY DAY MESSAGE SUMMARIZED IN THE NIGERIAN OBSERVER NOTED THE BITING INFLATIONARY SPIRAL AFFECTING WORKERS AND APPEALED TO WORKERS TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN VIEW OF THE DIALOGUE INVOLVING THE GOVERNMENT, THE EMPLOYERS AND TRADE UNIONS. FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S PERSPECTIVE IT IS FORTUNATE THAT THE NLC HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO PUT ITS HOUSE IN ORDER. ITS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IS EXPECTED TO MEET THIS THURSDAY AND, WHILE RECENT TROUBLES WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE DISCUSSED, THE PRIME ORDER OF BUSINESS WILL BE THE APPOINTMENT OF A SECRETARY GENERAL. SOME LABOR OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE ISSUE WILL BE SO DIVISIVE THAT NO(HING ELSE WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED.

9. COMMENT: ALTHOUGHT THE SITUATION REMAINS CALM, THE BASIC PROBLEMS WHICH SPAWNED THE DISORDERS OF THE LAST TWO WEEKS REMAIN. IF THE POLICE RESPOND QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE, WE BELIEVE THE SITUATION CAN BE CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE BIGGEST

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DANGER CONTINUES TO BE SOMEONE INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE MILITARY ATTEMPTING TO CAPITALIZE ON THE SITUATION FOR HIS OWN POLITICAL REASONS. END COMMENT.

10. EMBASSY IS CONTINUING TO EXERCISE CAUTION ON MOVEMENT OF ITS PERSONNEL TO AND FROM THE AIRPORT.
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